



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

[Handwritten Signature]

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/796,207	03/10/2004	Shigekazu Kato	520.30414C55	2416
20457	7590	07/28/2004	EXAMINER	
ANTONELLI, TERRY, STOUT & KRAUS, LLP			O MALLEY, KATHRYN S	
1300 NORTH SEVENTEENTH STREET				
SUITE 1800			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
ARLINGTON, VA 22209-9889			3749	

DATE MAILED: 07/28/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/796,207	Applicant(s) KATO ET AL.
	Examiner	Art Unit
	Kathryn S. O'Malley	3749

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 09 July 2004.

2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-4 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 1-4 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on 10 March 2004 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) All b) Some * c) None of:
1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. 07/751,951.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 3/10, 4/2, 7/9/04.
4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____.
5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6) Other: ____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 1 and 2 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over US Patent 4,923,584 to Bramhall, Jr. et al. in view of the article entitled "Drafts in Symposium of VLSI and FA Technology", hereinafter referred to as "Drafts".

3. Bramhall, Jr. et al. teaches a vacuum processing apparatus comprising a plurality of vacuum processing chambers 16-20 for processing substrates 30, a cassette mount table 26 for holding cassettes 28, and a transfer device 37 used to transfer substrates from cassettes 28, to processing chambers 16-20, and back to cassettes 28. Note column 13, line 43- column 14, line 24 and Figure 1. Bramhall Jr. et al. does not specifically detail that the processed wafers are transferred back to the original positions in the original cassettes in which they were stored prior to processing. "Drafts" teaches a similar substrate processing system comprising transferring substrates from cassettes, to processing chambers, and then returning the processed substrates to the original positions in the original cassette in which they were held prior to processing. As taught by "Drafts", it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the processing system of Bramhall, Jr. et al. with the returning placement of "Drafts" because transferring a processed substrate back to its original cassette will make it

easier to keep track of the substrate and will help ensure that the final substrates have been processed as desired.

4. Claims 3 and 4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bramhall, Jr. et al. and "Drafts" as applied to claims 1 and 2 above, and further in view of Mase et al.

Bramhall, Jr. et al., as modified by "Drafts" does not teach storing dummy substrates in a cassette. Mase et al. teaches a similar substrate processing apparatus comprising dummy substrates. Note column 1, lines 51-62. As Mase et al. teaches that the use of dummy substrates allows for more uniform processing of the actual substrates being treated and that dummy substrates are typically able to be transferred in the same ways as regular substrates, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the processing apparatus of Bramhall, Jr. et al. with the dummy substrates of Mase et al.

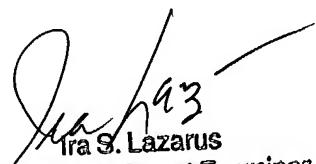
Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Kathryn S. O'Malley whose telephone number is (703)308-2844. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F (8:30-5:00).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Ira Lazarus can be reached on (703)308-1935. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

KSO



Ira S. Lazarus
Supervisory Patent Examiner
Group 3700